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New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support: causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 66/287, which was adopted following consideration by the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session of the report of the Secretary-General dated 1 August 2011 (A/66/214-S/2011/476), containing a review of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 1998 report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318).

The report sets out highlights of the major developments in Africa in the past year and examines the implementation by the United Nations system of key priority areas identified in the review report. In keeping with the mandate of resolution 66/287 to develop policy proposals on emerging challenges, the report provides an in-depth analysis of one of the most pressing issues in Africa, namely the management of diversity, and proposes concrete and practical recommendations.

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I. Introduction

1. In 1998, in response to a request from the Security Council, my predecessor undertook a comprehensive analysis of the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The report proposed specific measures aimed at reducing conflict, building durable peace and promoting sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318).

2. In 2009, in its resolution 63/304, the General Assembly requested me to submit a report reviewing the status of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 1998 report, focusing on new and emerging challenges and persistent obstacles, as well as innovative solutions, gains and accomplishments, in the attainment of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. A comprehensive review was undertaken, including broad-based consultations with Member States, the African Union and African regional economic communities, civil society organizations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations system, through the Inter-Agency Task Force on Africa coordinated by the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa. I issued a review report outlining the progress made, persistent challenges and new and emerging challenges facing Africa. I also set out recommendations and proposals for a renewed United Nations engagement with Africa (A/65/152-S/2010/526).

3. In my review report, I noted that the systematic exclusion of significant portions of society from institutions of political governance and from access to key economic assets and social services is not only one of the main triggers of conflict, but it also makes it difficult to attain sustainable development. In my report of 2011 (A/66/214) I focused on one element of the challenge, namely, an increasingly disgruntled and disenfranchised youth population in countries facing economic inequality, weak and unrepresentative institutions, lack of decent jobs, opportunities and freedoms and the increased risk of instability that this poses. This year, my report focuses on the larger issue of the management of diversity, and the urgent need to address the related peace, stability and sustainable development challenges.

II. A year in review

4. Since my last report, certain positive trends in Africa have been recorded. According to African Economic Outlook 2012,[1] outside North Africa growth was solid at 4.5 per cent in 2011, reinforcing the recovery of 4.8 per cent in 2010. Growth in West Africa averaged 5.6 per cent, in East Africa 5.8 per cent, in Central Africa 4.2 per cent and in Southern Africa 3.5 per cent. North Africa recorded zero growth in 2011, down from 4.2 per cent in 2010, due to political unrest.

5. Similarly, remittances from sub-Saharan Africans in the diaspora, which had been hit by the global financial and economic crisis, have risen from $20.6 billion in 2009 to $22 billion in 2011. World Bank projections for remittances for 2012 stand at $24 billion for sub-Saharan Africa and $40 billion for the entire continent.

6. Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into Africa have continued the downward trend experienced since the onset of the global financial and economic

[1] Produced jointly by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the African Union.

crisis in 2008. According to the latest estimated data of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, FDI inflows declined marginally from $43.1 billion in 2010 to $42.7 billion in 2011, a further decline from $52.6 billion in 2009. As a result, the continent's share of global FDI flows declined from 3.3 per cent in 2010 to 2.8 per cent in 2011.

7. On the governance and democracy front, 23 African countries will have held democratic elections between August 2011 and March 2013. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs continue to provide support to such electoral processes. Elections in the Niger completed a significant transition from military to civilian rule and legislative elections in Côte d'Ivoire have helped to consolidate peace following the post-election crisis in 2011. Elections in Zambia, Senegal and Lesotho in September 2011 and March and May 2012 respectively, brought peaceful changes of Government in those countries, further entrenching democratic practice.

8. In addition, the Democratic Republic of the Congo held presidential and legislative elections in November 2011 and Liberia held a constitutional referendum in August 2011 and presidential and parliamentary elections in November 2011. These were the second round of elections since the end of war in both countries. Sierra Leone will also continue its democratic transition with elections in November 2012.

9. The progress on elections and democracy has not been without challenges; elections in Mali and Guinea-Bissau were postponed following coups d'état in March and April 2012 respectively. Moreover, contested elections have sometimes led to violence and concerns remain about electoral laws and the functioning and management of electoral bodies. There is also the important question as to the extent to which democracy-building, broadly speaking, and elections specifically, facilitate constructive management of diversity in contemporary Africa, a question that I will deal with later in this report.

10. Africa has also faced several major crises, with the Sahel crisis and famine in the Horn of Africa affecting over 13 million people. Violence in Libya following the change of Government has created more than 900,000 refugees. The situation has also had a major impact on neighbouring countries. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated that by 27 November 2011, the number of migrant workers who had fled from Libya into countries such as Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana, Mali and the Niger stood at over 420,000. In addition to depriving thousands of families of remittances, their flight has added population pressure to communities already facing drought and exacerbated an already tenuous security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel region.

11. In addition, arms proliferation is aggravating long-standing conflicts and entrenching terrorist activities in the Sahel region. Rocket-propelled grenades, surface-to-air missiles, and man-portable air defence systems, previously held in the arsenal of the Government of Libya are now scattered across the Sahel region and could possibly fall into the hands of terrorist groups. Criminal groups in the region have taken the opportunity to increase recruitment and create local support networks for gathering information and supplying arms and ammunition, further facilitating transnational organized crime, such as human and drug trafficking.

12. In West Africa, some of the weapons used in the Côte d'Ivoire conflict still remain unaccounted for and pose a threat to the stabilization of the western parts of the country which border Liberia. The attack on United Nations peacekeepers at the border town of Tai underlined the security issues in the area. Also uncertain is the impact of the return into neighbouring countries of mercenaries hired and deployed during the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire.

13. In the Horn of Africa, a key concern is the situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States. Conflict over the disputed border has resulted in the outflow of more than 162,000 refugees into South Sudan and some 36,500 into Ethiopia in recent months. In February 2012, the United Nations, the African Union and the Arab League presented a tripartite proposal to provide humanitarian aid to civilians in both Government- and rebel-controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. I continue to urge the Government of the Sudan to accept the proposal without qualifications.

14. Despite the Sudan and South Sudan signing a memorandum of understanding on non-aggression and cooperation on 10 February 2012, violence and the presence of security forces from both sides continue along their shared border. On 12 March 2012, the parties initialled the Agreement on the Demarcation of the Boundary and the Framework Agreement on the Status of Nationals of the Other State and Related Matters. The agreement on boundary demarcation established mechanisms to oversee and conduct the demarcation process. I urge the parties to resolve the dispute regarding transit fees for oil.

15. The Security Council in resolution 2046 (2012) requested both parties immediately to cease all hostilities, including aerial bombardments, unconditionally withdraw all of their armed forces, including the police, to their side of the border and establish the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism and the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone. The Council also asked the parties to unconditionally resume and complete all negotiations, including on the status of Abyei and other contested areas. I remain hopeful that they will resolve the pending issues quickly.

16. With regard to Somalia, on 15 October 2011, the Government of Kenya launched "Operation defend the nation" into Somalia under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. The operation followed a series of kidnappings of tourists and local and foreign aid workers in Kenya by Al-Shabaab, the militant Somali Islamic group. Joint attacks against Al-Shabaab by Kenya, Ethiopia and the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia with African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troops have brought an increased measure of security to Mogadishu and allowed control of parts of the country to be regained. Kenyan troops were officially integrated into AMISOM on 2 June 2012. Meanwhile, the process for a return to stability in Somalia continues, with preparations for a new constitution and elections expected to be held after the end of the transitional period in August 2012.

17. Despite some progress on the issue of piracy, the waters off the coast of Somalia continue to be affected by new attacks. In its global piracy report, the International Maritime Bureau noted that attacks off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa accounted for the majority of all world piracy attacks, a total of 275 out of 439 reported in 2011.

18. The last year also saw an increase in the activities of Boko Haram, an Islamic militant group in Nigeria, including their ability to manufacture large-scale

explosives. On 20 January 2012, Boko Haram killed more than 170 people in shootings and bombings in the northern Nigerian commercial capital of Kano. Boko Haram attacks in other cities in Nigeria have left hundreds of civilians dead, including United Nations staff, and injured thousands of others. There are growing concerns about possible linkages and collaboration between Boko Haram and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb. In April 2012, the Heads of State of the member countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission expanded the mandate of the multinational joint task force to include a focus on cross-border threats to security, including Boko Haram.

Enhanced focus on the nexus between peace, security and development

19. The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, the report of the Secretary-General on civilian capacities, the priorities of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee are being used as a basis to develop and implement capacity development guidance tools to improve the linkage between humanitarian intervention, development and conflict prevention by providing a platform for bringing conflict analysis and peacebuilding approaches into regular development programmes.

20. Similarly, the United Nations framework team, comprising UNDP and the Department of Political Affairs, has provided crucial support in conflict analysis and peacebuilding, especially in non-mission settings in Africa, by deploying peace and development advisers to assist United Nations country teams with conflict analysis and prevention and peacebuilding strategies.

III. Implementation of the recommendations in the review report

21. My review report of 2010 outlined a series of recommendations to address key issues that are likely to dominate the African agenda and that will therefore require continued focused attention. This section provides an outline of the implementation by the United Nations system of key priority areas identified in my review report.

Institutional cooperation

22. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have developed a joint programme framework, outlining common priorities for their work, alongside regional constituents and development partners. These include developing an IGAD employment policy, combating human trafficking and piracy, addressing the root causes of vulnerability to natural disasters and promoting the actors of the social economy.

23. The Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa has the mandate to enhance international support for peace and development in Africa through its advocacy and analytical work and by facilitating intergovernmental deliberations on Africa at the global level. Working with the African Diaspora Program of the World Bank, the Office supported the initiative of the Pan-African Parliament to create a framework for engagement with parliamentarians of African descent worldwide. The framework for engagement led to the first parliamentary summit of the diaspora on 22 and 23 May 2012 and the recommendations made were presented to the African Union summit held from 16 to 18 July 2012.

Conflict prevention, conflict management and peacekeeping

24. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has helped to develop a technical note on conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding. The note outlines principal strategies, including identifying the root causes of conflict and violence factors affecting children and integrating conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding into strategies to reduce risks to children.

25. The United Nations system also assisted in the development of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, including advocating for the importance of social services as a component of peacebuilding and statebuilding.

Post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery

26. The Peacebuilding Commission continued to engage with six African countries that are placed on its agenda (Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone). In 2011, the Peacebuilding Fund allocated $77.5 million to a total of 10 countries in Africa. As of June 2012, the Fund has allocated $292 million to a total of 16 countries in Africa since its inception.

27. In Libya, the United Nations strategy is to support stabilization and peacebuilding efforts. The immediate objectives of the strategy are to provide fast-track support to the interim Government for socioeconomic stabilization, recovery and sustainable development. The United Nations system will help to promote the "decent work" agenda as a key instrument for post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding.

28. The United Nations system has also been actively participating in the South Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission. UNDP and ILO have worked to identify and promote employment opportunities within the framework of the Commission and ILO provided technical support for the South Sudan disarmament, demobilization and reintegration policy and strategy, developed and adopted by the Government of South Sudan in July 2011.

29. UNICEF has supported community-based child protection networks in Somalia to reduce discrimination and stigmatization of children from armed groups and has worked with young people to help to eradicate gun culture. In Chad, UNICEF has helped to reintegrate former child combatants using reintegration packages (life skills, training and psychosocial support) which target the family and the receiving community.

Sustained economic growth and sustainable development

30. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa continue to face the challenge of population growth and environmental degradation. Rapidly growing demands for water, food and energy affect production capacity and the environment, and failure to meet people's needs, reduce poverty, raise living standards and ensure greater equity all pose a threat to security, stability and sustainability.

Human rights

31. In the past year, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and South Africa have issued a standing invitation to the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and the Niger has presented its universal periodic review

report to the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review and the Human Rights Council. UNDP has facilitated national consultations, supported the preparation of national reports and thereafter the integration of recommendations by the Council into national frameworks and action plans in several countries, including Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

32. The Government of South Africa requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to train government and civil society representatives on treaty body compliance to enable the completion of pending reports for the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In Somalia, OHCHR supported two dialogues in Mogadishu in which human rights defenders based in Somalia, civil society groups and Government officials reviewed the text of the draft constitution from a human rights perspective and provided their comments to the Federal Constitutional Commission.

33. In Guinea, OHCHR provided technical assistance, organized a workshop for actors and stakeholders on draft legislation on the establishment of a national human rights institution and made comments on the draft legislation.

Rule of law and the administration of justice

34. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has supported West African Member States in their efforts to strengthen the administration of justice at the national and regional level. Working closely with the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), UNODC has supported law enforcement capacity-building. cross-border collaboration and criminal justice reforms.

35. The UNODC regional office for South Africa, the Southern African Development Community secretariat, and the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization have successfully implemented a regional project aimed at enhancing the capacity of law enforcement officials in Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, as well as the Southern African region in general, to respond effectively to violence against women.

36. In South Sudan, UNDP has worked closely with Government ministries and law enforcement agencies to strengthen the rule of law. UNDP has built up the capacities of legal institutions, helped to review criminal justice procedures and bring prison conditions in line with international human rights standards, and contributed to increasing access to legal services for all.

37. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the joint office of the Department for Peacekeeping Operations and OHCHR trained 2,000 police officers in crowd control and public liberties in an electoral period. Through the protection programme and the programme on access to justice for sexual violence victims, supported by OHCHR, UNDP and the Department for Peacekeeping Operations, hundreds of women have been assisted to participate in court proceedings. The office has extended its programme on access to justice for sexual violence victims to cover 9 out of 11 provinces in the country.

IV. Persistent and emerging challenges facing Africa: the management of diversity

38. Countries in Africa are diverse. Most of them are made up of five or more communities with varying social, political, communal or faith-based identities. In addition, women make up about 50 per cent of the population and a majority of the population of nearly 1 billion is under 30 years of age. To compound this, there are community differences based on sources of livelihood (such as pastoralism or fishing) and settlement (such as desert- and forest-based communities or urban slum dwellers).

39. While diversity can be a source of creativity and positive growth, when poorly managed, diversity often becomes a source of unhealthy competition, conflict and instability. In order to effectively address conflict, reduce poverty and ensure sustainable development, it is essential for policymakers, government institutions and supporting United Nations entities to understand and help address the unique needs of diverse groups. Moreover, women and youth, or communities affected by problems such as climate change, e.g. pastoralists, forest- and desert-based groups, face distinct and specific challenges which can adversely affect development efforts or lead to conflict.

40. As I noted in my report in 2011, one of the underlying reasons behind the North African revolts was the disenfranchisement of youth and their lack of economic prospects. Similarly, in the Darfur region, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, communal tensions often arise from competition for diminishing water resources and pasture.

41. Empirical findings from the African Peer Review Mechanism process in 12 countries[2] which have completed the review process indicate that most economic and political problems in Africa are either precipitated or aggravated by poor management of diversity. In particular, the legacy of colonialism has left uneven development: areas that were rich in mineral resources or fertile land, or near ports and other forms of transportation, received substantial investment, while others were ignored. African States inherited these economic and sociopolitical inequalities and in some cases further entrenched them. Moreover, in certain instances, any ensuing wealth from fertile or mineral-rich regions was concentrated in the capital and in the hands of the central State. Colonial and post-colonial Governments often failed to use wealth from resource-rich areas to address local needs. As a result, many parts of the continent have remained undeveloped and marginalized and the ensuing discontent with this state of affairs has led to violence in areas such as the Niger delta in Nigeria.

42. Thus, to manage effectively the multiple and competing needs of its diverse population, reduce poverty and ensure sustainable and inclusive development and prevent conflict, Africa needs to have a critical understanding of the complexities of diversity and the unique challenges faced by diverse groups. This is crucial for

[2] Economic Commission for Africa, *Diversity Management in Africa: Findings from the African Peer Review Mechanism and a Framework for Analysis and Policy-Making* (Addis Ababa, 2011), available from http://new.uneca.org/Portals/aprm/Publications/3-%20Diversity%20Management.pdf.

creating political, economic and social governance structures that encourage nation-building in a peaceful and democratic manner.

A. The management of diversity and its impact on human and economic development

Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals with equity: reaching excluded and/or marginalized groups

43. In the past decade, African countries have made significant progress in reducing the mortality rate of children under 5 and increased immunization coverage and the percentage of the population using improved water sources. In other areas, such as education, sanitation, nutrition and the adult literacy rate, Africa has experienced a marginal increase or has been able only to stop the trend from reversing. In spite of the progress made, major disparities remain among population groups and across the rural/urban and male/female divide and in meeting the goal on maternal mortality.

44. Rural/urban disparities pose the greatest socioeconomic and political challenges to countries in Africa. Most of the economic and population growth that is taking place in Africa is urban growth. However, poor urban dwellers often face some of the worst forms of poverty and exclusion. Rising food and fuel prices means that families often spend 50-80 per cent of their income on food and fuel. There is often limited access to clean water, sanitation, electricity and health care — even though they may live close to these services. Children may be compelled to enter into dangerous and exploitative work to survive, or may drop out of school, or fail to attend all together. Such lack of access is not just a developmental problem. It is, in fact, closely linked to an explosion in urban crime, including gang activity and organized crime. Moreover, recruitment by militant and extremist groups often targets disenfranchised and discontented groups, such as youths.

45. Through "Back to school" campaigns in Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia and South Sudan, UNICEF encourages community-level engagement, distributes essential school materials and provides temporary learning spaces, when necessary, to keep children in school during and after conflict (and other crises). It also strengthens the capacity of Ministries of Education through technical assistance with policy, guidelines and system development and programme planning. Accelerated learning programmes in Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone offer children and adolescents who have missed periods of their education, a second chance to complete primary school, mostly by compressing the curriculum.

46. Non-formal and complementary education programmes in Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania promote access to primary and vocational education and, less frequently, secondary education for disadvantaged groups.

Equitable access to opportunities, public resources and basic services

47. In terms of basic service provision, access to water is a particularly sensitive issue in drought-prone areas where there is competition between farmers and pastoralist communities. While conflict over water has been an underlying factor in most low-intensity conflicts in the Horn of Africa, finding solutions to the problem can serve as a starting point for dialogue and joint community water management

mechanisms can facilitate cooperation and reduce tensions within and between communities. Involving the community in each step of the decision-making process and ensuring that each household has equal access to resources is both an important developmental goal and also serves as a tool for conflict prevention.

48. In Somalia, joint local water management boards bring together various representatives from communities with the shared objective of water provision and access. The Community-led Total Sanitation methodology in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and South Sudan focuses on behaviour change and participation, rather than merely supplies. It enables populations to develop their own choices about key priorities in water and sanitation and builds ownership of the subsequent resources.

49. Access to opportunities is equally sensitive in a continent where unemployment rates are sometimes higher than 20 per cent. The lack of equitable access to opportunities, particularly economic opportunity, is a growing factor in discontent, as evidenced by the North African uprisings. Narrowing the access gap, particularly for the youth, is an important step towards sustainable development, as well as the achievement of peace and stability in Africa.

50. When it comes to accessing financial resources and the support and information needed to do business, women still face significant, often structural, challenges. For example, most of the informal cross-border traders in Africa are women. Because of the informal nature of their business, risks are often high. In 2011, the International Trade Centre (ITC) worked with Governments to assist informal cross-border traders operating between Rwanda and Uganda to convert to formal small and medium enterprise status. ITC trained 189 such traders from East and Southern Africa in export procedures and trade facilitation regulations and published a simple information guide on how to register a business, comply with cross-border Customs procedures, find business support services and obtain the necessary licences and permits to export legally and safely. A larger initiative incorporating women traders from the East African Community and South Sudan is envisioned.

51. Related to this is the need to develop long-term export financing accessible to women and to support Governments in reviewing and modernizing existing land legislation, in order to give women better control and equity in land ownership, since land is often the sole form of collateral available for business financing.

Impact of climate change on ecosystems and livelihoods for vulnerable groups

52. Climate change contributes significantly to increasing disparities in access to education, nutrition, water and health and raises the risk of conflicts over life-sustaining resources. Consequently, the planning of humanitarian interventions and sustainable livelihoods needs to integrate considerations of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation so as to increase community resilience and decrease conflict potential. The better management of water and forest resources is a crucial component of both mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

53. Research conducted by the United Nations University for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees[3] and by the United Nations Environment Programme,[4] shows that environmental considerations are increasingly affecting the movement of populations in the Horn of Africa and Sahel regions, the areas projected by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to be most negatively affected by climate change in Africa. This is exacerbating long-term risks, such as pests, disease, land pressure, soil erosion, deforestation and depleted water resources, which exist regardless of climate change. The results are prolonged droughts, desertification, flash floods and land degradation.

54. Beyond the Horn of Africa and Sahel regions, erratic weather presents serious challenges to people dependent on rain for livelihoods based on farming, pastoralism and even artisanal fishing. In the context of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Millennium Development Goal No. 7 on environmental sustainability, the United Nations University project on sustainable management of marginal drylands is working in Burkina Faso, Egypt and Tunisia to foster the rehabilitation of degraded drylands. The project is enabling communities to reduce dependency on rain-fed agriculture by improving sustainable water conservation and harvesting practices, developing policy guidelines for decision makers and encouraging alternative income-generating activities in order to reduce dependence on less sustainable forms of agriculture.

B. Management of diversity, good governance and conflict prevention

Diversity and conflict

55. The reports of the African Peer Review Mechanism on African countries which have gone through the review process highlight the management of diversity, particularly communal and confessional diversity, as a key challenge facing African States.[2]

56. The problem of diversity-related conflict is partly a legacy of poor colonial administrative practices and the discriminatory policies of post-conflict African Governments. Many African communities were split apart by national boundaries created during the colonial era. In the immediate aftermath of independence, post-colonial Governments feared that major conflicts would be occasioned by the redrawing of boundaries and decided to maintain colonial borders. Today, however, the consequences of that decision are that ethnic or religious nationalism and sentiments of group victimization and marginalization can cover huge areas and generate conflicts that extend beyond borders. That is the case in the current situation between Chad and the Sudan and of the Tuareg people in West Africa.

57. In other instances, arbitrary and forcible integration undertaken by colonial authorities and post-colonial Governments, compounded by policies of ethnic and religious profiling and classification, have over the decades reinforced cleavage lines and in some cases created divisions that did not previously exist.

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[3] Tamer Afifi and others, *Climate Change, Vulnerability and Human Mobility: Perspectives of Refugees from the East and Horn of Africa* (United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security, 2012).

[4] UNEP, *Livelihood Security: Climate Change, Migration and Conflict in the Sahel* (Geneva, 2011).

58. Because of such legacies, African States often struggle to create effective political, economic, social and cultural governance systems that are credible and truly accommodate the interests and aspirations of diverse groups. Marginalized groups begin to see the national State as incapable or unwilling to address their grievances, or worse, as being actively biased against their political, economic, social and cultural interests, such as the right to practice their religion.

Supporting States and civil society to better manage diversity

59. Inter-community or community-versus-State conflicts often arise from contests over identity and privileges, such as citizenship and the right to vote, competition over resources, services and opportunities, exclusion, domination, marginalization and unjust and inequitable power configurations. Indeed, inequality in access to resources and opportunities among the constituent groups and especially, sectional, hierarchical, discriminatory or exclusionary power relations are the key precursors of social tensions and violent conflict anywhere.[2] Indeed, it is the extent to which diversity is politicized and instrumentalized, rather than the types and forms of diversity in a country, that determines whether diversity will become a source of conflict and instability.

60. In societies with a high degree of politicization and instrumentalization of diversity, day-to-day issues, such as the composition of school boards, savings and credit associations, or even sports teams become paralysed by acrimonious debates over representation or lack thereof on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion and regionalism.

61. Societies with less politicized and instrumentalized differences are characterized by the acceptance that certain institutions, such as parliament, government and civil institutions, have to be representative, and constitutional arrangements are made to ensure that this is so. However, such societies also accept that merit and equal opportunity for all to compete for all positions is a better way of ensuring fairness than rigid attempts to make sure each community is represented in every facet of social life.

62. In this context, creating capable and legitimate States that enjoy the support of the population across the diversity divide is one of the critical challenges for Africa. To achieve this, a level playing field and effective and neutral oversight by Governments are critical. Also needed are civil society and community groups actively working towards cohesion, local conflict resolution and joint approaches to problem solving, as well as the active involvement and participation of all groups in finding solutions.

63. Democratic institutions which reflect the plurality of a society are one way of ensuring the inclusion and participation of everyone. However, African countries face the real and difficult question of how to improve social, economic and political pluralism and participation, including through multi-party political systems, while ensuring that political competition does not become a source of further divisions in those societies.[5] Clearly, democracy demands freedom of association and freedom of expression. However, in some cases, this freedom has been taken to mean that political entrepreneurs have the freedom to form and deploy parties along religious,

[5] African Peer Review Mechanism, *Country Review Report of the Republic of Rwanda*, June 2006. Available from www.eisa.org.za/aprm/pdf/Countries_Rwanda_APRM_Report.pdf.

racial or tribal lines, a practice that only serves to deepen inherited schisms. The vulnerability of some African societies to this manipulation by opportunistic entrepreneurs highlights how fragile nation-building is on the continent and the need for more legal protections for nascent democratic processes.

64. In some instances democratic elections are sold to the public as a competition between groups and the rules allow the winner to take all the spoils. Such electoral processes are often prone to violence and further entrench a negative discourse between communities. This is especially so where there is severe resource competition or discrimination, or in post-conflict or transitional societies.

65. Managing such challenges requires the building of capable and legitimate States and governance systems in which peace and security are guaranteed and sustained. Such governance systems have to be capable of creating and sustaining the type of political and legal environment suitable for equitable economic growth and access to opportunities and services, particularly the most basic ones, such as physical security, water, education and health. Such a governance system has to be created in concert with and continuously work with civil society, local organizations and the private sector to ensure the full participation of all groups, including youths, women and people with special needs, in the economic and social decision-making structures at local and national level.

66. For example, in Somalia, the United Nations system is supporting the African Union, IGAD, and the Transitional Federal Government in addressing some of these issues. Although there have been efforts to accommodate diverse political groupings in political power on the basis of clan representation, the situation is extremely complicated and requires creative approaches and strategies to accommodate diverse groups and address issues of diversity at local, national and regional levels.

Lessons from the North African uprisings on the management of diversity

67. The uprisings that have occurred in North Africa over the past year amply demonstrate that ignoring the needs, suffering and dreams of young people can unleash much social and political turmoil. As stated in the report of the United Nations Development Group entitled *Strategy of Response to Transformative Change Championed by Youth in the Arab Region*, the tidal wave of transformative change processes in the Arab region to reclaim human and national dignity inevitably reshapes the operating or enabling environment within which the United Nations works at regional and country levels. It also provides an opportunity to rethink development assistance and cooperation approaches in ways that lend more prominence to the interlocking issues of authentic democratic governance, rule of law, social justice and equity and employment-led, inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic growth.

68. The North African uprisings are triggering renewed attention to governance models and democracy trajectories, as well as to inclusive and equitable economic development driven by employment. Such models need to be particularly responsive to the needs and roles of youth and women, as well as result in social contracts with more inclusive State-society relationships and responsive and accountable citizen-centred Governments. In Egypt, where nearly 80 per cent of rural women are unregistered, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) has formed a partnership with the Ministry of the Interior

to organize the registration and issuance of identity cards to rural women. Nearly 1 million women have now been registered.

69. Addressing the root causes behind the uprisings and continuing crises in North Africa requires improved governance and rule of law. These are prerequisites for political stability, socioeconomic progress and building the credibility of the new Governments in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia and any other country in the continent. States gain legitimacy only when individuals, organizations and institutions, both in the public and private sectors, are accountable under the law and where the State ensures the physical safety of individuals, communities, institutions and infrastructure in a manner that protects rights. To achieve this, laws must be applied equally and independently adjudicated in a framework governed by the principles of transparency, integrity and justice.

70. As Governments in North Africa define and address the current and future national priorities and actions required to establish democracy, security, law and order, so the support provided by the United Nations and the international community to the countries in the region should be based on comprehensive consultations with Governments, emerging political actors and civil society.

Participation and representation: women, girls, youth and persons with disabilities

71. Africa is described as a young continent: according to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, over 60 per cent of the current population of Africa is under 30 years old. Within this demographic, women and girls make up half the population of the continent. Proper management of this demographic requires their active and substantive participation in the economic, social and political milieu. An increasing number of United Nations country programmes are engaging youths, including young girls, as agents of social change, enhancing their capacity to engage in civic action such as volunteerism, community development and peaceful conflict resolution.

72. In partnership with nine other United Nations agencies and the Government, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has initiated a joint programme on youth employment for the Sudan and South Sudan. UNIDO is assisting in building the capacity of Government and private partner organizations for entrepreneurship and short-term technical skills training and providing training packages to youth.

73. An often overlooked demographic is that of people living with disabilities and special needs. ILO notes that persons with disabilities constitute about 15 per cent of any population. About 80 per cent of children with disabilities in developing countries do not have access to basic education. Conflicts increase the number of persons with disabilities, including ex-combatants, and post-conflict reintegration cannot be successful if the needs of persons with disabilities are not taken into account. The proper management of diversity in Africa requires that the needs and contributions of persons with disabilities be better thought out and included in policy planning and implementation.

74. The participation of women is also a key challenge. Evidence shows that in times of social, economic, political and environmental crises, including conflicts, women suffer disproportionately because of their already unequal status. Social and political crises often translate into loss of employment and income and the challenge

of finding new jobs, as well as depreciation in the value of their micro-, small and medium enterprises and the inability to recapitalize, with implications for their dependants.

75. To address such setbacks, United Nations country teams must work with Governments to strengthen women's access to and participation and representation in the institutions of social and political dialogue, and address gender-based violence, including rape and sexual assault, as a weapon of war. Many African countries are increasingly using affirmative action measures, including quotas and equal opportunity policies, as a tool for diversity management to strengthen the participation and representation of women in national institutions and processes. With regard to sexual violence, UN-Women and the Department for Peacekeeping Operations have jointly developed a gender-sensitive predeployment training programme on conflict-related sexual violence in peacekeeping for troop-contributing countries such as Kenya.

Social exclusion and its contribution to terrorism and transnational organized crime

76. Terrorism and transnational organized crime are partly fuelled by the ineffective management of socioeconomic diversity. Organized crime syndicates and terrorist groups exploit socioeconomic vulnerabilities, such as high unemployment, poverty, endemic corruption and social exclusion. Societies affected by conflict, political transition and economic or social crises face the unavoidable challenge of crime, including a surge in organized criminal activity. Temporary weaknesses in governance, such as weak border controls and poor law enforcement operational capacity, can create avenues for extremist groups and terrorists. Indeed, a number of post-conflict countries in Africa face significant levels of poverty and political instability, making them easy prey for organized criminal syndicates and terrorist groups.

77. Under the overall framework of its regional programme for West Africa for the period from 2010 to 2014, UNODC is supporting West African Member States in addressing evolving security threats. UNODC provides technical assistance and capacity-building packages to law enforcement in the region, with the aim of helping to curb terrorism, the illicit flow of drugs, human trafficking, counterfeit medicines and arms proliferation.

78. Together with the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA)/the Department of Political Affairs, the Department for Peacekeeping Operations and INTERPOL, UNODC, under the West Africa Coast Initiative, has worked to address illicit drug trafficking and organized crime in West Africa, through enhanced national institutions and cross-border collaboration among ECOWAS Member States.

79. Despite this, West Africa continues to be a key transit route for drugs from Latin America to Europe and the potential for instability and worsening peace and security demands more effective strategies in line with the principle of shared responsibility between transit and receiving countries.[6] This is particularly so because infiltration by terrorism and transnational organized crime in the region

[6] See UNDOC, *The Transatlantic Cocaine Market* (Vienna, 2011).

siphons off huge resources that would otherwise be devoted to promoting sustainable development.

C. Tools and processes for the management of diversity

80. Diversity is a living reality. In fact, the effective management of diversity must begin with perceiving it as an asset rather than a liability. Diversity creates a large variety of cultures, traditions, languages and ways of living, which can be sources of knowledge, initiative and cross-pollination of ideas and therefore hold great potential for development.

81. Countries which have been successful in managing diversity use a variety of tools and processes. At the political level, the management of the interests of multiple groups has often been done through proportional representation in decision-making institutions, as well as through judicial and law enforcement structures. Proportional representation is mostly utilized during elections, either through the reservation of seats for certain groups on electoral rolls, or through the establishment of councils of minorities which are to be consulted on legislative bills or policies of special relevance or interest to them. This allows diverse groups the space to exercise their political rights, but often poses a risk of continued domination by the majority group, since it tends to have the highest numbers of representatives in such an arrangement.

82. Other tools for managing diversity are the processes and laws that make society a welcoming place for all. Countries such as South Africa have created a policy of recognizing minority languages as national or official languages and making public documents available in those languages. This increases ownership and identification with the unitary State. It also meets the fundamental need for the recognition and respect that all people want for their languages, cultures, religions, traditions and histories. In other countries, such as the United Republic of Tanzania, the use of a single local language not identified with one community but used by many to serve as the official language has helped to create the same unifying effect.

83. States have also explored decentralization as a tool for managing diversity. In some instances, this may include granting some form of territorial autonomy and fiscal control to autonomous regions and counties over local affairs, resources and development budgets. Such autonomy can be limited, as in the case of simple decentralization, where a national budget agreed at national level is implemented locally by local authorities. It can also be more expansive, with budgets allocated to regional governments which then decide what projects to undertake. It can also be complete, as in the case of Zanzibar in the United Republic of Tanzania, where, although the island is an integral part of the nation State, it retains its own government, parliament, and most other government institutions, except an army.

84. Federalism is one of the forms of decentralized autonomy that has been most explored in Africa as a device for managing diversity and it has been particularly popular, as it appears to be the best way to guarantee power-sharing, local autonomy and fiscal decentralization, equity and local resource control. However, this approach is not without its weaknesses. Decentralization and autonomy processes often come with huge costs and complexities, particularly in the relationship between the central State and regional governments. There are also concerns that

such solutions run the inherent risk of encouraging a sense of difference and, instead of helping a country work towards unity, only serve to make it permanently divided.

85. Beyond forms of autonomy for regions and groups, in countries such as Burundi and Somalia, peace negotiations have entailed drafting constitutions that support a unitary Government but stipulate a clear formula for balanced representation of groups at the Cabinet level and in Government positions.

86. Even with political representation resolved, countries can still suffer intercommunal or group-versus-State conflict if law enforcement is not perceived as being equitable. Minority participation in, acceptance of, and sense of ownership in the security sector is particularly sensitive, as representative police and security forces are directly linked with lower levels of conflict in diverse societies. Indeed, equitable access to jobs in, and the ability to obtain protection and other services from, the security and law enforcement sectors is important for long-term stability. The military or police can be a unifying institution, reflecting and creating bonds between the diverse elements of a society in order to strengthen cohesion and operate optimally, helping to forge a national vision of security that transcends different identities, and providing security for vulnerable groups, including women, girls and minority men.

87. In countries where conflict between communities has already occurred or where polarization is a problem, there is a need to strengthen sanctions against ethnic and religious incitement and deliberate politicization of differences. There is also a need for a civic education strategy that works towards creating a common national identity, enhancing social cohesion and promoting non-violent forms of conflict resolution and the values of collaborative living.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

88. Political stability and equitable and sustainable growth require the effective management of diversity. The challenge of the management of diversity lies in creating institutional and political arrangements and an infrastructure that enable major societal divisions to be moderated and reconciled. Without proper management of diversity there is no successful nation-building. Successful nation-building happens when the community of citizens live in peace with each other and work towards the improvement of their mutual economic and social well-being under a shared system of effective and inclusive institutions.

89. The effective management of diversity is therefore a critical requirement for the social and economic transformation of Africa. Instituting the structural changes in socioeconomic and political governance which are essential for fostering the proper management of diversity is the first step in addressing the challenge. To achieve this, there is a need to build capable State institutions that advance the security, sociopolitical and economic well-being of all citizens.

90. **To this end, I call on African Governments, with the support of the United Nations system and the international community, particularly the development partners and international financial institutions, to work towards greater social protection for the most vulnerable groups, with a view to strengthening human capital, reducing vulnerability and promoting equity, employability and productivity.**

91. **I urge the United Nations system and the international community to work towards a more integrated approach to addressing peace, security, development and humanitarian and human rights issues in the Sahel region, and to continue to support African countries in their efforts to strengthen the rule of law, reform their security sectors and implement international human rights standards at the national level.**

92. **I call on the United Nations system, the international community and, in particular, the development partners to support efforts in disaster risk reduction, sustainable livelihoods and community resilience in areas affected by climate change, both as part of a sustainable development agenda, but also as a critical element of conflict prevention and mitigation.**

93. **I urge African Governments, with the support of the United Nations system, to identify and implement inclusive and equitable policies that narrow the gap of access to basic social services and economic opportunities, particularly for young people, women and other marginalized groups, as this is an important step towards the achievement of sustainable peace and stability in the continent.**

94. **I further urge the United Nations system to support national efforts to clarify access and rights to natural resources, such as fertile land and water, land tenure and access to justice, as a prerequisite for effective national, local and regional governance.**

95. **I call on the United Nations system to support African Governments in initiating and implementing processes through which young people can be actively and effectively involved in peacebuilding and Statebuilding efforts.**

96. **I reiterate the commitment of the United Nations system to work with Member States, particularly through UN-Women and the mainstreaming of gender issues, to strengthen women's participation and representation in decision-making processes and in social, economic, cultural and political dialogue and to fight against discrimination and gender-based violence.**

97. **I call on the United Nations system, the international community and all partners to strengthen their support to African countries in their democratic nation-building efforts. In particular, I call for support to national processes and policies which promote inclusive and participatory political systems; credible and transparent electoral processes which ensure equitable representation of minorities in representative bodies; and institutions which address economic and political inequalities as a means also of preventing grievance-based conflicts.**

98. **I call on the United Nations system, the African Union and regional economic communities in Africa and the international community to look again at how to create effective strategies to address the significant challenge of transnational organized crime, particularly in post-conflict or fragile States, in line with the principle of shared responsibility between transit and receiving countries.**

99. **I encourage civil society in Africa, particularly religious and local grass-roots organizations, to initiate and develop civic education strategies aimed at building a common national identity, social cohesion, non-violent forms of**

community dialogue and conflict resolution, and in promoting the values of collaborative and peaceful coexistence.